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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0398
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0330
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0562
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1685
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000987

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN (PERRY)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT OF TURKMENISTAN REFUSES TO MAKE PUBLIC
MYRADOVA AUTOPSY

REF: ASHGABAT 00983 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Jennifer L. Brush for Reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) On September 16 Turkmenistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashit Meredov, emphatically told OSCE Ambassador Djikic that Turkmenistan did not intend to make public the results of the Myradova autopsy. Taking a legalistic approach, Meredov told Djikic that Myradova's case had been handled in full compliance with Turkmenistan's law and stressed that local law did not permit the government to release the autopsy results to anybody other than family members. He also said that an investigation still was pending into additional charges of espionage and treason against the two remaining individuals convicted with Myradova, Annagurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Hajiyevev, and said that Turkmenistan's Ambassador to the OSCE would react if requested by participating states to the Myradova case at the next meeting of the OSCE's Permanent Council. Charge plans to have a moment of silence for Myradova during a media reception on September 19 and to raise the case along the lines used by the OSCE CiO if she sees Meredov on September 20. On September 18, French Ambassador Christian Lechervy told Charge, German Charge and UK Ambassador that the French program "Galaxie" intended to show a documentary on Turkmenistan, portions of which feature Myradova and Amanklychev on French Channel 2 at 1900 local time on September 28. Lechervy said a number of other television stations, including Al Jazeera, had bought the rights to air the documentary. End Summary.

Djikic Meeting

¶2. (C) In response to the CiO of the OSCE, Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht's September 15 press release expressing deep concern about the death in custody of Ogulspapar Myradova and calling on Turkmenistan's authorities to adhere to their OSCE commitments and to conduct a full and

impartial investigation into her death, Foreign Minister Meredov called in OSCE Ambassador Djikic on September 16. Djikic had been requesting a meeting with Meredov since before Myradova's death. Following the meeting Djikic told Charge Meredov's response was emphatic:

-- Ogulspapar Myradova was not a registered journalist and therefore should not be considered one;

-- Myradova's case was handled in full compliance with Turkmenistan's law: Myradova's lawyer had been given access to the bill of indictment and to the court decision as prescribed by law;

-- Myradova's autopsy had been conducted by a certified and accredited forensic doctor and the results would be released to the family eventually;

-- Turkmenistan law permits autopsy results to be released only to family members, so the government would not release the results publicly;

-- An investigation is still pending into additional charges of espionage and treason against Annagurban Amanklychev and Sapardurdy Hajiyev, who were convicted with Myradova of weapons possession;

-- Turkmenistan's Ambassador to the OSCE would respond to the Myradova case during the next OSCE Permanent Council meeting if requested by other participating states.

13. (C) According to Djikic, Meredov also said that

ASHGABAT 00000987 002 OF 002

Turkmenistan would officially protest the participation of "criminals and terrorists" in the upcoming OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) in Warsaw and would boycott the meeting if these persons were allowed to attend. (Comment: Meredov likely is referring prior attempts of various Turkmenistan opposition groups to attend the HDIM as NGOs. End Comment.)

14. (C) Djikic told Charge that he responded that not following up with a full and impartial investigation into Myradova's death would be a bad move for Turkmenistan. Meredov, according to Djikic, was unimpressed. Djikic called on the Government of Turkmenistan to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into her death.

Journalists Reception

15. (C) Charge is planning on offering a minute of silence for Myradova at a September 19 media reception at her residence which may be attended by Foreign Ministry officials. The Charge also plans to raise the Myradova case if she can get a meeting with Meredov; she plans to call for a thorough and impartial investigation and a public explanation of the investigation results as soon as possible.

French Documentary

16. (C) Charge met with German Charge and UK and French Ambassadors on September 18 to compare notes and review progress. According to French Ambassador Lechevry, the French television company "Galaxie" had prepared a documentary on Turkmenistan which was scheduled for broadcast at 9:00 pm local time on French Channel 2 on September 28. Lechevry said the documentary was based on footage the Galaxie team took the first time it came to Turkmenistan earlier this year and featured Amanklychev and Myradova. In response to Charge's comment that the two should be considered Galaxie reporters, Lechevry said no, they were strictly source "stringers." According to Lechevry, there were two versions of the documentary, one 52 minutes long and

the other 26 minutes, both focusing on the deteriorating educational and health systems in Turkmenistan and Niyazov's demolition of private homes. Lechevry said he had seen the documentary and it did not include interviews with locals in Turkmenistan, but rather carried footage shot by the Galaxie team, accompanied by commentary by various opposition representatives living outside of Turkmenistan. According to Lechevry, other television stations had purchased rights to show the documentary, including Al Jazeera.

Comment

17. (C) The consistent message coming from EU, OSCE and the United States is very helpful. The autopsy report will take a couple of weeks, giving the government time to reverse its decision about making the report public. That said, the report will likely be inconclusive, that is why, embassy believes, the government did not prevent embassy representatives from viewing the body. End Comment.

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BRUSH